

# LABOUR

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# ORGANISER

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*To be well-informed, you must read . . .*

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# THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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## *The Answer to 1949*

**W**E spoke last month about 'two urgent matters.' The gap between our local and parliamentary vote, and the extra support we must win to offset the 1945 'sleeping' Tory vote which is now coming to life.

The results of the Borough, Urban District, and Rural Council elections show that in the brief lull between polling dates much was done towards closing the gap. Although we again lost seats our setback was far less serious, comparably, than that we suffered during the County elections.

**But the Local Government elections of 1949 are now history. Once we have learned the lesson they hold for us—and everyone must learn that lesson—it will be a waste of valuable time to hold further inquests in search of excuses or alibis.**

The answer to 1949 must be the result of 1950! That, in a nutshell, is the conclusion. And the result will largely depend on the success, or otherwise, of the current membership campaign. It is the responsibility of every key worker to set an example to his colleagues. If their zest and drive is permeated throughout the Movement then thousands of potential members in city and village alike will be drawn into the Party . . . and a bridgehead will have been established on the road to victory.

## *Given Encouragement . . .*

**T**HE League of Youth is the subject of an article by Len Sims, Assistant Southern Regional Organiser, on Page 14. His opinion, that much better use can be made of the League's potentialities, is borne out by local election stories from all parts of the country. Some areas reported complete apathy on the part of their Leaguers—others that the League was filling a vital niche in Party organisation.

Luton stood three League candidates. **Three were returned—two of them topping rural polls whilst the third took a County seat with an increased majority.** Twickenham decided to hold an eve-of-May-Day open-air meeting—it lasted for 7½ hours. Preston tackled a Ward considered so hopeless that the Party ignored it—they polled 1,500 votes and now aim at gathering 2,000 from it in 1950! These are facts . . . undisputable . . . and proving that given encouragement the League will, in turn, give results.

## The Membership Drive Starts

# THIS CAMPAIGN CAN

**M**EMBERSHIP CAMPAIGNS have been a regular feature of Labour Party activity over many years. With the ending of the local elections another membership campaign is being launched.

But it isn't 'just another' campaign. It is probably the most important in the chequered history of the Labour Party.

have been busy repairing their shattered election machine. Now they have an organisation at their command superior to anything they have had in the past.

Its effectiveness has been demonstrated in the parliamentary by-elections as well as in the local elections. Tory supporters are now brought out to vote in full force. Labour has been able to counter the Tory

by **A. L. Williams**

- *The membership campaign opens this month and is to continue right up to the 1950 General Election. Its success, as we all know, is vital to the Party's and the country's future.*

*In this article the Assistant National Agent puts forward his views on the campaign along with the broad outline of its scope and character.*

Consider what is involved. On the outcome of the next General Election depends the future of our country, and Britain will either continue along the road of democratic socialism or retreat down the capitalist road, leading who knows where. The plain fact is, we cannot risk losing the General Election: everything we stand for is at stake.

### **It Can Guarantee Victory**

The new drive for members is an essential part of the preparations which can guarantee victory. What we do now will determine the result of the great clash of parties a year hence.

From the standpoint of organisation we were better prepared than the Tories in 1945. Yet they polled nine million votes against our 12 million.

During the past four years the Tories

offensive only where its election machine has been superior. And in the main that has been the case in by-elections where the Constituency Labour Party has had the full weight of Head Office behind it.

In the General Election, as in the local elections, Constituency Labour Parties will have to stand on their own feet, since Head Office assistance cannot be concentrated on any particular place. Now is the time for local Labour Parties to mobilise their forces. From whatever angle this question is viewed the answer is **MEMBERSHIP**. The Tories no longer rely on the select few and a staff of paid election workers. They have gone out after a mass membership and in some places they boast of 10,000 or more members.

Obviously, a large part of these members will consist of people who have little knowledge of Tory philosophy and their

# DECIDE 1950 RESULT

monetary contribution will be the minimum of 2s. 6d. a year. But the Tories know if a man puts a bob on a horse at least he will want it to win.

A drive now, properly planned and with enthusiasm behind it, will give us the membership we need. There is in the possession of all Parties canvass returns from the local elections which will be invaluable in planning the campaign. It is nothing less than criminal for canvass or polling returns to be destroyed or lost. Nevertheless, there are many Parties guilty of wantonly throwing away the results of hours of gruelling work of many people. The information given in the returns makes it possible to plan a Membership campaign so as to achieve the maximum results with the minimum of effort.

Those who promised to—and did vote Labour—in the local elections will not treat unsympathetically an invitation to join the Labour Party. A call on those who voted against will be a complete waste of time. Many new members can be enrolled quickly, but that is not enough. A regular collection of the new recruits' contributions should be arranged so as to avoid the old trouble of new members being lost and, worse than that, becoming disgruntled because of the breakdown of collections. Moreover, a determined effort needs to be made to bring a proportion of the newcomers into the active life of the Party. Social activities, meetings and discussions should be held to that end.

New members are reluctant to take on jobs involving too great a responsibility or prominence. All the same, many are ready to help within the limits of their capacity and interest, but it is not unusual for new members to be frozen out because they are never asked to do anything really useful, just as many are frightened off by being expected to do too much.

Two of the publications Head Office has issued for the campaign will describe the manifold activities of the Party in a novel manner, as a means of encouraging Labour supporters to join in. This sharing in the organised effort to build a new

Britain should be the chief feature of this great appeal for recruits.

Too often previous Campaigns have started off with a great blare of trumpets, to be forgotten before long because of the pressure of more routine duties on the limited time of the Party activists. The present campaign is to go on throughout the whole period between now and the General Election. It is not intended to postpone the routine work of the Party while the Campaign lasts. Rather the routine of the whole Party should be centred on the Campaign.

## **Old Fighting Spirit**

If Executive and General Committees, Wards, Women's Sections and Leagues of Youth devote their meetings to planning the Campaign, receiving reports of progress, finding volunteers for special work, the old fighting spirit will revive and a new purpose will inspire us. By the time the electoral battle is to be fought we shall command a powerful organisation, aggressive and confident.

By spreading the work over several months it is possible to avoid overtaxing those who will carry it out. It is much better to devote two nights each week for several months to the Campaign, than to have a hectic couple of weeks on the job.

The first places to be tackled should be those where unexpected weaknesses were revealed in the recent elections, such as Labour strongholds where much less than the usual vote was polled. Then attention might be given to marginal wards where more workers and better organisation would consolidate our hold on a majority of the electors.

Even in hopeless wards members can be found, and these places should not be neglected because it is essential to pull the maximum support from the constituency as a whole at the General Election.

## **Then the 'Doubtfuls'**

When all the known Labour voters have been approached it is possible to turn to the 'doubtfuls.' The results will not be so fruitful, but the successes achieved will

(Continued on page 15)

# Scotland Stands Where It Did!

Says JOHN TAYLOR, Secretary, Labour Party Scottish Council

**T**HE three sets of local elections in Scotland showed encouraging results. The Tory attack on the Burghs was a flop. They had a few gains, but only in one place were their gains substantial. Elsewhere their anticipated landslides did not materialise and, had they not been assisted by Communist and I.L.P. candidatures, they would scarcely have won a dozen seats in all the Scottish Burghs.

This seemed to knock the heart out of their campaigns for the Counties, a week later, and we emerged from these second elections with more seats than we held before they started. Here is a general view of the results:

Scottish Burghs: Labour gains, 32. Labour losses, 60. Net losses, 28.

Scottish Counties: Labour gains, 25. Labour losses, 20. Net gains, 5.

I write these notes before the results of the District Council elections are complete, but the score at the time of writing is over 30 gains and it looks as if the final results will increase that number.

## Tories Disappointed

There is no doubt that the Tories are bitterly disappointed at these results. Before the burgh elections the Tory papers (and that means every one of the 17 daily newspapers printed in Scotland) carried ponderous prophecies of heavy Labour defeats. According to some of them we were to be practically wiped out in many towns. After the burgh results, and after they had made the most of their few scattered gains, the elections were no longer news and the subsequent campaigns in the Counties passed off quietly.

But the percentage polls in the County contests was high, with an average in the industrial and semi-industrial counties of 70 per cent. The average for the burghs was 43 per cent. We gained seats on the higher percentage poll and lost them on the lower. The lesson is obvious.

We had one severe setback in the burgh elections in Edinburgh, where we lost 11 seats, mainly because of a redistribution of all the wards. This necessitated a local 'general election' in which organisation was not good. Our people had been slow to adjust their machine to the new requirements, while the Tories had been

planning for months. The cost of learning that lesson is three years' hard labour. There have been some hectic campaigns in the electioneering history of Glasgow but none as high-powered as the one we experienced this year. Like Edinburgh, it had a 'general election' involving the whole Council and 111 seats. It was the Tories' golden opportunity for Labour, jaded by 15 years of power, seemed to have lost much of its fire and fighting capacity. Literally thousands of Tory workers swarmed into the Glasgow 'closed' deluging the electors with a steady succession of 'literature,' each leaflet more extravagant in promises, more reckless with truth, and more scurrilous with personal attacks than its predecessor.

## They Used Every Device

Treble and quadruple canvasses gave them a record of every Tory vote. Loud speaker vans and cars thudded their slogans so that they reverberated endlessly through the high stone canyons which are Glasgow's streets. Hundreds of 16-sheet posters screamed 'Had Enough?' and 'Clear the Socialists Out!' and similar slogans from every hoarding. In short they did every conceivable thing and used every device known in electioneering and used them with a zest and bustling enthusiasm.

I am inclined to think they overdid it. Our own people, at first either stagnant or openly defeatist, began to take an interest. They came along to the committee-rooms, at first in a trickle, then in goodly numbers and finally in a flood, all boiling over with indignation at the mendacity and swashbuckling of the Tories. The remarkable thing about the election in the 33 Scottish Counties is that there were so few changes in all those hundred of contests. 25 gains and 20 losses—only 45 changes from verdicts which were three-and-a-half years old. The monotonous regularity of the 'no change' messages gave the unmistakable affirmative to the historic query: 'Stands Scotland where it did?'

After four hours on the telephone satisfying myself that Scotland *did* stand where it did, I went out to stand myself drink. I felt that both Scotland and I had earned it. In any case, I needed it.

## Register Trouble

**A**N UNUSUAL TANGLE in the local election for the Burgh of South Queensferry in the shadow of the Forth Bridge, has been reported from Scotland.

The Burgh extended its boundaries last November, and in the new part then taken over is a cottage containing Mr. and Mrs. Russell Macintosh and their son whose name is also Russell Macintosh.

The local Labour Party decided to adopt R.M. Junior as a Labour candidate for the Burgh Council, and R.M. Senior as a Labour candidate for the County Council. The Register, however, contained only one Russell Macintosh at that address, and the question arose as to which one it was. The Town Clerk ruled it was R.M. Senior, as Mrs. Macintosh was also registered, and that it was the son who had been mistakenly omitted.

In Scotland there is a second qualification for eligibility to be nominated, namely the residence qualification by which a person who has lived continuously within the Local Government area for the full 12 months prior to the date of nomination may be nominated.

### Not Resident

As R.M. Junior had lived in the same house with his parents all his life, it seemed that this qualification would be in order. But the site of his house had only been within the Burgh boundary since the extension last November and therefore it was ruled that he had not the full year's residence within the Burgh.

Nor could we claim that the R.M. in the Register was in fact R.M. Junior, and defy the Authorities to prove otherwise, because R.M. Senior, on being nominated for the County, had invoked his registration as his first qualification for nomination.

There was, in fact, no way to nominate the son and another candidate had to be found. An unusual tangle, not likely to recur, but interesting as an academic point and as an instance of yet another unfortunate result of imperfect Registration.

## Colin Macphee

**I**T WAS A SHOCK to hear of the death of Colin Macphee at the early age of 36. It was sad to think that he passed away in loneliness and distress. Poor Colin. The normally trite and usually sickly sentimental phrase 'broken heart' is, at the news, suddenly shorn of its triteness and sentimentality, and becomes the only possible phrase to use for the troubles which have ended in his untimely death. The loss of his happy young wife was a blow from which he never recovered. His devotion during her illness and his agony at her passing were hard things for his friends to see.

### Edited the 'Organiser'

Colin took over the editorship of this journal when it ceased to be published by the Agents' Union and was taken over by the Party. It was a difficult responsibility for the journal had been so largely built up on the personality and ebullience of Herbert Drinkwater and, for one or two issues, we watched its progress with some anxieties. It would be difficult to imagine two persons so dissimilar as Colin Macphee and his editorial predecessor.

But we need not have worried. Colin's journalistic skill and his ability to visualise and choose the best material came quickly to the top and the journal not only retained its popularity and value to the Movement, but greatly increased the number of readers who regarded it with a special affection and who eagerly anticipated each new issue. His many other duties for the Party were all carried through with the same hall mark of his personality.

### He Gave Us Comradeship

We will remember him as a fine journalist, as an enthusiastic administrator in Local Government, as a shrewd commentator on current affairs, but most of all as a quiet soul, giving us without conditions or question, a comradeship we should have valued more than we did.

J.T.

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# From My Election Postbag

By HAROLD CROFT

**T**HE 'POWERS THAT BE' put a spell on me and I was drawn into answering election queries which were multitudinous. From amongst them I recount some which have points for newer agents.

There were woeful complaints of nomination papers declared invalid and seats handed free to opponents. Candidates trusted to one nomination paper! For years we have drummed the necessity of providing three nomination papers so that risks of invalidity are reduced to a minimum. In one or two cases candidates were tripped up by not realising that noon was the latest time for delivery on the last day. But why had they left delivery to the last day? Nomination is vital, and sensible election agents should give responsible and early attention to nomination papers.

In one case a local deputy asked for the nomination paper to be given to him. This was done the day prior to the last day. The deputy transmitted the paper to the R.O., but it did not arrive until 4 p.m. and was declared invalid because received after statutory time. Another similar default occurred when a clerk at the council offices received the paper but did not hand it to the R.O. in time. The paper was declared invalid. Default of officials may be a case for prosecution and possible fine, or for a petition to void the election. In these cases it was not clear whether the candidates concerned had explicitly followed the directions in the R.O.'s Notice of Election. But note there was one paper only in each case. If three papers are prepared, one can always be sent by post to the R.O. and risk of dubious reception minimised. Election agents in rural areas especially should take thought about delivery of nomination papers and if there is any cause for doubt take steps to let the R.O. know that nomination papers have been deposited within the time.

Nomination papers signed with but one initial by assentors are held not to disclose identity sufficiently, and are in legal opinion invalid. An R.O. declared such a paper valid because he knew all the assentors and so identity was not doubtful or in question. He would appear to have been in order. Of course, if an

R.O. declares a paper valid, his decision cannot be questioned in any proceedings whatsoever.

One candidate, reading the following provision—"The description shall not refer to the candidate's political activities and need not refer to his rank profession or calling so long as, with the other particulars of the candidate, it is sufficient to identify him"—thought if he did not desire to mention his occupation, he need not fill in a description. His nomination paper was declared invalid on account of "no description." The wording does not exclude a necessity for description. If a candidate does not take the easy course of describing himself as a miner, a clerk, a surveyor, etc., an alternative description might be awkward. One might perhaps put member of local cricket club, local preacher, collector under Savings Committee, or some such description. But the nomination is the aim, and it is best not to create doubts, and to refer to one's occupation is easy and uncomplicated.

Another R.O. accepted a nomination paper with the description "Agent of the Prudential Insurance Company," and these words appeared on the ballot paper. In the Manchester (Merseyside) petition case the Judge expressed a definite opinion that the description should not be used to include any advertisement, and the new provisions relating to description were influenced by this case. The R.O. should have deleted reference to the Prudential Insurance Company after consultation with the candidate or his election agent if possible, otherwise on his own discretion.

A Labour candidate delivered his nomination paper at 9.15 a.m. on the last day and an Independent candidate delivered his at 11.30 a.m. The R.O. discovered that certain assessor had signed both papers. The Labour paper was declared valid, the Independent paper invalid. If the Labour candidate had followed the Independent candidate by a few moments—his paper would have been the invalid one. He again only one paper, and in the last three hours of nomination time. Mere change gave validity to the Labour nomination paper. And further, with only one paper

what lack of care in not selecting only solid Labour assentors.

\* \* \*

One laconic letter informed me that on nomination day, no nominations whatever had been received for the seven vacancies on the Rural Council, and asked if Labour could now nominate for the vacancies. Well! well! I had to point out that in such a case the previous retiring seven councillors would be deemed to be elected to the council. If any of them did not desire to act they would no doubt refrain from signing the form of Acceptance of Office and a casual vacancy in each case would arise and Labour could nominate candidates.

\* \* \*

In one election the Notice of Guidance to Voters gave as an illustration of marking a ballot paper the name "Brown" with a cross opposite. One of the candidates was named Brown. My correspondent had noted that *Parker* warns the R.O. that in compiling lists of fictitious names for his directions he should, for instance, not use "Brown" if there is a candidate of that name. My correspondent will have a certain satisfaction in penning a courteous note to the R.O. quoting the page of *Parker*.

\* \* \*

In a case of equality of votes, the R.O. gave a casting vote. The provision requires the R.O. to take decision by lot, an additional vote being recorded for the candidate whose name is determined. A petition is the only process to upset the election. In this case, much publicity ensued in the local press. Labour is proposing to urge the successful man, in view of the R.O.'s illegal vote, to cause a casual to arise.

Quite a number of absent voters exercised the postal vote in one election. It excited a little notice. It was elicited that a local doctor who was a candidate had signed certificates on a number of applications for the postal vote by sick people. Of course there was nothing wrong or irregular in this even if it could be shown that the doctor had prompted numbers of his patients to apply for the facilities of postal voting. Amongst his numerous patients there may have been those who told him they would have voted for him, and it would have appeared reasonable to him to suggest they could do so. In rare circumstances a case might occur where a medical man could use some undue influence but patients or families could resist or complain.

An R.O. put restrictions on a candidate and Election Agent at a count. He required them to sit apart and refused to allow them to take any part in overlooking the count. He consulted with them on spoilt papers. The R.O. was quite wrong in limiting the candidate because the candidate may do what an agent of his may do or is required to do or may help him (at the poll or count). On the question of the Election Agent it must be admitted a slip has occurred in the drafting of R.T.A. 1948. The words "and his Election Agent" should have been inserted after the word candidate in the above provision in the schedule. The intent of the Home Office Committees was that the Election Agent should have a statutory right to be present as the Election Agent with the opportunity to overlook and scrutinise at the Count, in full accordance with what custom had already reasonably allowed, as a prescriptive right. We are looking into this.

\* \* \*

Imprints and poll cards of opponents prompted much correspondence, but I had to point out there was no need to be concerned about them. In the case of poll cards, unless there is "a fraudulent artifice to mislead electors" and this has to be proved in fact or circumstance, there is no basis for prosecution. Judges in these days hold that a poll card is a partisan bill and is so read by electors. The only case I have known which was directly actionable was where it was said: "You have a vote, give it to (John Tory)," whereas, in fact, electors had two votes. John Tory capitulated and sent out another poll card. On imprints, even if one contains only the name of a printer and his address as both printer and publisher there is technical accord with the provision. Where a bill did not show the Tory Agent's name as publisher and was an appeal from a Councillor to electors to support a certain candidate I suggested our Agent should write to the Tory Agent stating that as the bill lacked his name there was presumption it was issued by the Councillor and that notice would be taken as to whether the cost was returned under Section 42. In cases where an imprint had been omitted I suggested Election Agents should communicate with the opposition Agent or candidate, pointing out the infringement of the Statute. Such action stirs up the opponents to "watch their step."

(Continued on page 18)

# ELECTION PUBLICITY

**R**EPORTS FROM EVERY region record a marked improvement in election publicity. Whilst there is room for still further progress there are unmistakable signs that the bleak, uninspiring addresses of past years are fast being relegated to their natural setting—among the museum pieces.

Six model addresses were prepared by Head Office for the recent campaign, each of them suggesting new innovations. (The reproduction at the foot of this page will help you to remember them.) Some of the points we attempted to popularise among those responsible for publicity were:

- To arouse curiosity.
- To change the shape from the old stereotyped 10 in. by 8 in. production.
- To change the fold and, in doing so, to use the new design not just as 'something different' but as a foundation for a more forceful presentation of the candidate's case.
- To use a coloured ink on coloured

paper, thereby opening up many possibilities.

- To use good action photographs reproduced in an unusual setting such as with a background of polka dots (as in model B), or with a different screen size (see Welsh model address).

What reception did the new ideas get? Judging by the specimens sent to this office, very favourable. An enormous range of techniques was called into use with a basis to be found in one or other of Head Office's suggestions. In addition many Parties planned addresses incorporating their own ideas, some of which are so good that they deserve the widest publicity.

The model "A" address doesn't seem to have been used at all. In a way this is understandable as it presented more difficulties than any of the others. A great deal of time and patience plus an expert hand would have been needed in the writing of the text, whilst, technically, this was an expensive process—although

*Good colour - brown and green on green paper*

*Sticking slogan*

*The better type of candidate's photograph*

*Fine photograph*

There is no problem

For The \* Common Good ...

if you read inside

Provocative Slogan

WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE LABOUR

CAN I HELP YOU?

TOURIST TRADE

EDUCATION

HEALTH & WELFARE

YOUR MONEY

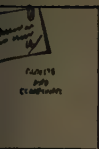
LABOUR IS B...

A Message to the Electors of the Rochester South Division from

**Ernest R. SPENCER**

THE LABOUR CANDIDATE

A BETTER LE



A



B



C



D



E



F

it could have been reduced by use of the Roneo method. But it was particularly disappointing to note that the basic idea expressed here, and in other models, wasn't used. The idea of the 'curiosity approach'—of keeping back the nature of the printed matter until the elector, challenged by the cover, had started to read the inside pages. Ninety per cent. of our publicists either aren't interested in this type of appeal or, in trying to follow it, have omitted some of the basic principles.

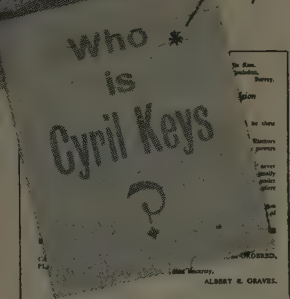
Although there is still a lot to be done here many Parties are on the right road. The Surrey Federation, for instance, produced a really striking variation of model 'B' with a red and white map of the county and a reversed white on red slogan reading, 'It's in our hands.' Coupled with a well-laid-out text this was the best address to come to our notice. At the

other extreme—in design technique and cheapness—the Goltyn Ward, in Flintshire, prepared a small introduction to their candidate (8 in. by 5 in. with a fold) with 'Who is Cyril Keys?' in red lettering on a yellow paper. The elector's immediate reaction was to open it to find out, and inside was a homely-written biography. This particular candidate's address followed the same pattern with a quotation on the cover and no other indication of its purpose.

Both South Wootton (King's Lynn) and Yardley (Birmingham) used model 'C'. At South Wootton the simple slogan 'For the Common Good,' supported with a pointing hand, had a good effect. Yardley almost bettered them with 'There is no problem' but spoiled the effect by printing 'Why you should vote Labour' in small type at the foot of the cover. Both these addresses had well-laid-out inside pages.



VE  
OI  
Only other success  
fully used.  
e will not all back involve us get too much  
covered build-up some have access to sub-  
working possible. All our plans for school  
and include rules by the collective as issued  
as we will not use any formal written words,  
to be very. We and create real feeling



A clever  
adaptation  
of part of model B.

An original  
idea!



Two unusual  
colours—red  
and grey



Fine rural  
appeal

FOR A BETTER SURREY

Shotton (Flintshire) used the simple slogan, 'A proud record' but rather frightened the eye with a surrounding old-fashioned frame. In practically every case agents will get a better effect with a simple box rather than an elaborate decorative design. On their inside pages Shotton tried an original conversation between two electors. Although affording the opportunity to present the subject in a light manner the writing of this type of copy requires extremely delicate treatment if both arguments and candidate's name are not to be monotonously repeated.

The most popular of the ideas in the models was that of a change in paper size and new types of folding. Most parties followed one of these two suggestions. Model 'D' address, however, wasn't used at all—among those we have seen, although the small caricatures were very popular. Coloured ink and paper were hardly touched. Those who tried it were quite successful.

### Annoying Feature

The most annoying feature of the campaign was the high proportion of quite good addresses marred by the use of poor photographs. Very little originality was displayed here. Leicester was an outstanding exception. A large photograph of the city on a red background told its own story and arrested the reader's eye. In the County fight, Brentford used a good print of Edward Johnson in a speaker's pose, but it deserved better treatment than the adjacent typography. Gravelly Hill Ward of Birmingham had a commendable shot of Mrs. Hodgson asking an elector a question and at Abbey Ward, Kenilworth, a good group photograph of Labour workers was used with the caption, 'Our concern is yours.'

At Sparkbrook, Birmingham, a series of sequence pictures showed a retiring councillor's duties during his term of office. For the Party with a good photographer in its ranks this affords many chances so long as pictures are kept really convincing. The address at Rochester South, in the County elections, had a personal appeal to the area with a front-cover rural scene. In colour, and inside lay-out, these Kent addresses gave little grounds for criticism.

But for every one of the examples mentioned there were a hundred photographs too reminiscent of the 'family album' of the 'nineties. Parties will have to learn that it is better not to use a photograph rather than use a bad one.

What about text and types? It is in the text that there is most room for improve-

ment. Some are saying too much, others are saying little, but including too many biographical details, and practically everyone is being too stiff and formal. One address contained 1,200 words of close-set type! People just won't pause to read this encyclopaedic approach. Far better to use fewer words, attractively displayed, as suggested in some of the models. A few Parties took this too far, however, and used our text word for word instead of adapting it to local circumstances as was suggested. To sum up, we are presenting a human case—so for goodness sake let's present it in human terms and sweep away the stiff formality that is better suited to the Minute Book.

Typography is a lot better. At last it seems that many of the Caxton Era types are being left to one side. But better use can be made of bold and italics in the text. More care should be exercised with column widths.

But despite our criticisms a great deal of progress has been made and Parties can be justifiably proud of their work. The few who still wander over the moors must, however, get back on to the road. In these days of high-powered advertising electioneering literature demands modern lay-out, copy, and printing. The Conservative Party is realising this, too, and it is our task to ensure that in publicity, as in policy, they stay in their back seat.

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# The New 1949 Representation of the People Bill

## Consolidation of Electoral Statutes

**'CAST DOWN** THE seed of weeping and attend!' Let us sit with our faces to the wall and tell sad tales of the violent ends of famous laws. The old and mighty Ballot Act of 1842 is no more, its ancient glory left but as a memory. Of the sombre and puissant Corrupt and Illegal Practices Acts of 1883, 1884 and 1890 there remains but odd scabbled ruins of archaic law. The massive Municipal Corporations Act of 1882 is laid low, its grandeur as one of the great monuments of legal craftsmanship gone. The imposing and towering edifice of the 1918 Act has crashed into the limbo of repeal, leaving but one fragment as its epitaph. That trio of spacious L.G. statutes, The England and Wales Act of 1933, The London Act of 1939 and The Scottish Act of 1947 have suffered devastation of electoral provisions and their famous Second Schedules are now lost in oblivion.

### Started with 1695 Act

It started with the Parliamentary Election Act of 1695, the whole Act repealed, and then fifty statutes from 1800 to this day have suffered ignominious assault and many of them have gone down wholly into the grave. Even the young and lusty Representation of the People Act 1948 has been pierced in twenty-eight provisions, and will soon pass into the shade, after its hectic rampage in the recent local elections.

But all is not lost—like Phoenix arising from the ashes—the new consolidated 1949 Representation of the People Bill, heir of all the electoral statutes, full of its ancestry and proud in its modernity, emerges from the wrack and desolation to salute us.

What does all this mean? In brief, it means that the new Bill is an omnibus measure which provides for the Franchises, Registration, and the Conduct of Parliamentary and Local Elections, and embodies the law relating to Corrupt and Illegal Practices at Elections. Assimilated in the Bill are the electoral provisions of the older Acts and so it is a consolidated compendium of relevant law.

When the Bill passes through Parliament and becomes R.P.A. 1949, election agents

will have a single governing Act for registration and election procedure. Some points now need notice. The Bill does not deal with disqualifications for election to Parliament, which are contained, often obscurely, in about eighty statutes; nor does it deal with the qualifications and disqualifications relating to standing for election to a Council. The 1933, 1939 and 1947 Local Government Acts relating to England and Wales, London and Scotland retain all provisions except those relating to actual election procedure, so the portion relating to Casual Vacancies, Acceptance of Office, Election of Mayor, Aldermen, alternations to boundaries and wards, etc., etc., must be sought in these Acts.

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### The Sands of Time

... are running dry where the League of Youth Rally at Filey is concerned. There isn't much time left for applications and the great week (Sept. 17-24) isn't far off. What is your League doing? Is your Party helping them? Have you personally been doing all you can to ensure a successful week?

---

On the publication of the new Act, agents are advised to go through the Ninth Schedule and delete the repealed provisions from the Local Government Acts of 1933, 1939, 1947 and other Acts, as the case may be, for themselves. Once agents have become used to the new statute they will find it a more convenient guide for their practical considerations than the multiple of Acts which hitherto have had to be consulted and linked before an interpretation could be achieved.

The new Act will make the present booklets, which were produced for the local elections, somewhat out of date, and revised editions will be issued in due course. A new edition of 'Conduct of Parliamentary Elections' embodying the new legislation is being prepared, as well as a booklet on Franchises and Registration. The new manuals will give agents an outline of the new Act, together with appropriate inclusion of provisions from the various statutes and orders linked with the Act.

# Is the League Overlooked ?

Asks LEN SIMS, Asst. Southern Regional Organiser

**N**OW THE ELECTIONS are over and we are assessing our set-backs—what they mean politically and organisationally—it would be wise to seek remedies and reasons and not to find excuses. It must be admitted, for instance, that no matter how much the Budget may have influenced the electorate, our opponents' election organisation was superior to ours. They utilised their personnel to the full. It is true that they have money and paid staff but, if we are to retain power, we must use the resources available within our movement to counter what money can buy. And what better resources could we wish to have? It is a question of re-deploying the actual strength and developing the potential strength that we have at our disposal.

## Considerable Potential

It is not my intention nor purpose to deal with these issues, but to put forward one line of approach—one with considerable potential and, as yet, generally overlooked. I refer to the League of Youth.

Can Parties claim to have given full consideration to the possibilities of the League? Can they claim to have given the encouragement so necessary to young members? Quite frankly I do not think so. Most Parties have yet to mobilise our youth into an effective striking force, and go out of their way to support League activity. This criticism is, of course, in general terms as we have instances where the League does play an important role in the activities and affairs of the Party and complete harmony exists. But it is also true that in other cases the League has not faced up to its responsibilities as we would have liked.

## What Can Be Done ?

What can be done to ensure maximum co-operation? This article is an endeavour to assist both Party and League to arrive at some conclusions.

Firstly some suggestions for the Party. See that a Branch of the League is established in each locality. At the moment we have some 3,100 Local Parties and yet only just over 600 Branches of the League are functioning. Should it not be possible at this stage to form a Branch in each Local Party area? It should at least be possible on a Divisional basis.

Encourage young members and respect their views. It is necessary to try and understand their background and realise that their experiences are so different from ours. Their approach to problems must therefore be influenced as a result.

I suggest, too, that the League be approached to consider the question of appointing understudies to the officers—secretary, treasurer, propaganda officers, etc. It would also be well worthwhile allowing a member to sit as an observer at Council Group meetings. All this would be valuable groundwork and relieve our hard-working comrades thus so enabling them to expand their scope and tackle the many problems that are facing us.

Encourage League members to play their full part in the affairs of the Party and see that representation is afforded them on the General Council and Executive Committee in the same manner as we do for the Women's Section. By gradually bringing them into office and giving them responsibility we shall go a long way towards developing keen energetic youth.

## Encourage Them NOW

This encouragement should not be shown just before an election when certain jobs—such as delivery—have to be undertaken, but right away, so that by the time the General Election is here we shall have that band of trained and enthusiastic workers so necessary for success. The last thing to do is to give the impression that the League is the hand-maiden of the Party.

Membership drives should be organised and the League invited to play its part. League members should be allotted to experienced canvassers in order that they may gain useful experience. Provision for a representative of the League at public meetings should also be made and if members are encouraged to give a short speech—such as moving a vote of thanks—it will provide the basis of training for future speakers. Should by-elections occur see that the League has an opportunity to participate in every phase. Encourage the young members to undertake specific tasks suitable to their individual temperaments.

(Continued on page 18)

(Continued from page 5)

be of great value. Before an actual call is made on them, it is wise to arrange for leaflets and other literature to be distributed to them weekly for several weeks.

In all cases, a night or so before the canvasser calls, the delivery of a letter from the Member, or the Prospective Candidate, intimating that a Labour Party representative will pay a visit will tend to lift the whole business to a level of dignity, not always achieved in our contacts with the electorate.

All this calls for hard, gruelling work, but that it is worthwhile will become apparent as the Campaign proceeds and the organisation begins to take shape. There will be new members on the books and new people to take responsibilities from the overburdened few.

### Marked Register

The agent will be compiling a record of the new committee rooms that are likely to be available, car owners who might be persuaded to give a hand in the election, and members who could be asked to be polling district and street captains. His register will be marked so that by the end of the campaign he will know where the floating vote is and if the campaign has been a success. He will have the means of ensuring that our vote is polled on that fateful day in 1950.

This is a big job; but it is one that the Party MUST start now.

## IMPORTANT

Some contributors are failing to observe the deadline for copy—the 15th of the month for publication the following month.

This applies to advertisements as well as articles, which should be sent to the Editor, "Labour Organiser," Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1.

Remember, too, that all your key workers should take out a subscription to the "Organiser." In view of the summer campaign and the approaching General Election, it is vitally important that they be kept in touch with current news and views on problems of organisation both locally and nationally.

# Appointments

ELEVEN NEW AGENCY appointments have been approved by the N.E.C. in constituencies ranging in character from rural Banbury to London's Bermondsey. Among the appointed are officers of wide experience as well as newcomers to the problems of full-time organising.

JAMES MCGRANDLE, who has taken up duties at West Renfrewshire, is a 36-year-old ex-engineer with wide experience as an unpaid organiser. During the last General Election he controlled the Kelvingrove Division of Glasgow and won the seat for Labour for the first time beating Walter Elliot, on a recount, by 88 votes. Since then Mr. McGrandle has controlled the 1945-6-7 local elections in Dumbarton. He holds a Grade A Certificate of Proficiency.

Two Welsh appointments have been made—at Cardiganshire and Cardiff City. A: the former MR. R. H. ROCHELL, aged 34, brings to his post a wide knowledge of Welsh affairs and of Labour problems. He was formerly connected with the Welsh Economic Development Association. Cardiff's new agent is MR. J. J. BISHOP—a full-time agent for two years and formerly at Northfield and King's Norton. He is replacing Mr. C. A. O'Donnell.

Another agent making a transfer is REG BELBEN who has left Clitheroe to start at Banbury. He is replacing R. G. Hayward, who has gone to Rochester and Chatham, and the vacancy at Clitheroe is being filled by MR. A. T. BREAKWELL, aged 27, a member of the Party for 11 years and prominent at Preston, where he was a Councillor and at one time a League of Youth Secretary.

Another League Secretary—as long ago as 1936—is MR. C. H. BALDERSTONE, who is now agent at Gosport and Fareham. Aged 31, he was responsible for the formation of a Youth Parliament and a U.N.O. Branch in Chatham.

A member of the editorial board of one of our brightest "locals"—Windsor's *Progress*—is now agent at Spelthorne. He is MR. WILLIAM FRANCIS who, in addition to holding the Secretaryship of the Windsor D.L.P., has controlled many local elections. North Hendon has selected a shop proprietor and former textile worker in MR. E. W. HILL.

The other appointments are: MR. A. SWEETLAND, aged 33, to Birmingham Borough; MR. J. R. THOMAS to Bermondsey; and MR. STEPHEN JONES to Bexley.

# Local Elections in Perspective

By CLEM JONES, Secretary and Organiser, South Western Region

**W**ITHIN A GENERATION Labour's struggle for control of the machinery of Local Government has changed fundamentally in character. It began as guerilla warfare. It has evolved into trench warfare, which becomes more intensive with each successive local election. This must be clearly understood if the Party is to have an accurate estimate of its present position and a full understanding of its task for the future.

Prior to 1914, when local elections were suspended for five years, Labour Councillors sat in small numbers on many of the principal Borough Councils. Their 'election platform' was simple and primitive, and their election was an expression of resentment against flagrant social wrong rather than acceptance by the electors of a positive Socialist programme. Here and there are the beginnings of concerted group action within the Councils had developed.

## Attack Extended

An orderly and wide attack upon Council seats was not possible until the Party Constitution provided in 1918 for the recruitment of an individual membership. Methodical Ward organisation then became practicable if not easy. In 1919 the attack was extended and a considerable advance made. Policy manifestos and election addresses were related more closely to the functions and responsibilities of the various Local Authorities, Housing, Public Health and Education figuring prominently. It is demonstrable that between 1919 and 1939 housing progress was proportionate to the size and vigour of the Labour Groups on the respective Local Authorities.

Naturally and inevitably the Party's endeavours in the earlier stages of this long contest were limited to the more promising Wards or Electoral Divisions, and the obviously difficult or apparently hopeless had to be left uncontested. But

the seats which year by year were won had in the course of time to be defended, not always with success, so that the battle-front in these sectors fluctuated. And increased representation could be secured only by the conquest of more difficult ground. The situation had now been reached when every victory lengthened the lines of defence and restricted the area of attack. Moreover, every inch won in this restricted area leaves still more difficult terrain. Conditions of grim trench warfare exist in which only the hardest fighting can produce small advances and the danger of being pushed back is ever present.

## Post War Picture

That appears to be the general strategical picture. It is worth while to look more closely at the temporary disturbance and confusion produced by post-war circumstances. Following the Parliamentary General Election of 1945 the Labour forces were flushed with victory, confident, exhilarated, ready to move mountains. The Tory armies had been smashed to pieces, were beaten and demoralised, and for many months lay semi-conscious, licking their wounds. Compared with them, Falstaff's ragged army was a disciplined body. At the Borough Elections of November, 1945, and the County and District Elections in the Spring of 1946, Labour gains were counted by the thousand, and nobody was more surprised than large numbers of Labour candidates who suddenly found themselves Councillors.

In normal electioneering conditions this advance would have been the fruit of many years of effort. To anyone examining the position calmly it was clear that a great deal of this ground so easily won could not be consolidated. In the Boroughs and the larger Urban Districts some of these Councillors were elected for

*(Continued on page 18)*

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## Good News for Local Editors

THERE IS GOOD NEWS for those flourishing periodicals whose expansion was held up by the paper limitation. The permitted quantity has now been raised from 8 cwt. to 16 cwt. every four months. This is a grand opportunity for the recent intensive canvass will have provided Editors with the names and addresses of thousands of potential new readers. Bigger sales mean relatively lower costs. Make your advertising man's job easier and turn deficits into profits.

Another interesting result of this relaxation is that our older journals are able to come forward with a helping hand to the weaker brethren. The Glasgow *Forward* is now producing a weekly edition to replace the monthly *Dundee Citizen*, whilst the Birmingham *Town Crier* is acting as godfather to monthly *Town Criers* for Staffs. (Lichfield) and Oldbury and Halesowen. This is the type of co-operation that will lead to big dividends.

A large number of newcomers have arrived in the field during the past month or two. They are: Cheltenham *Herald*;

Clayton (Manchester) *Clarion*; Smethwick *News from Labour*; Tonbridge *Labour News*; West Ham North *Labour's Voice*; Rotherham *Progress* (duplicated); Fulham *Voice*. Others we have heard of, but not yet seen, are: Islington *Labour News*; Stranraer *Clarion*; Leicester *Labour and Co-op News*; Stoke Prior *Liberty*; Barkston *Ash Ash Tree*; Harlow *News*.

May we again remind Editors that we should like two copies of each issue and any other information either of successes or difficulties, that they can supply.

Looking at the wide variety of these Labour publications, and assessing the thousands of homes they must reach, it is clear that they have played an important part in the local elections and that they will, in the future, carry an ever increasing responsibility in stating our case and exposing the misrepresentation of our opponents. Not a little of the strength of the hard core of Labour vote is due to the persistency and hard work of the hundreds of voluntary Editors, Business Managers, Distributors, and so on, in every part of the country. The movement owes them a great debt of gratitude.

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*coming events cast their shadows before*

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## Local Elections in Perspective

(Continued from page 16)

one year, some for two, and some for three years. The first batch came up for re-election in November, 1946, and the casualty rate was high. It was higher still in November, 1947.

The final lot of these easy gains had to be defended, over the whole field of Local Government, in April and May of 1949. Even in the most favourable circumstances not all of them could have been held. The circumstances were not the most favourable. A new factor entered of very great importance. The Tory machine had fully recovered from its former demoralisation. With stupendous resources, and unceasing drive from a revitalised Central Office, Tory organisation in the country was now in finer condition than ever before. It pushed its attack home, and in many areas out-organised and out-fought Labour Parties which were unprepared for the weight of the onslaught. The wheel has come round full turn, and Labour is now back to honest-to-goodness bedrock.

There is not the space nor is it the purpose of this survey to deal with policy, but observation of much local electioneering provokes one comment. Here and there Parties and candidates have naïvely sought to represent themselves as harmless and inoffensive and really very similar to their opponents. It is significant and salutary that they fared badly at the polls, and that those who stood on a bold and clear policy and emphasised the unbridgeable gulf which separates them from their opponents held their ground best.

Finally, modern elections are not contests between candidates, but battles between machines, and Labour Parties throughout Britain must recognise that for the future they will be compelled to devote more money, more effort and more sound election organisation to this long ding-dong struggle.

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### From My Election Postbag

(Continued from page 9)

The omission of an imprint from an ordinary election leaflet would involve a fine at most, indeed a candidate and Election Agent are not solely to blame, for by common law a printer is himself required to put his imprint on all matter to be issued to the public. Real seriousness over the omission of an imprint would arise in the case of a libellous or misleading leaflet.

## Is The League Overlooked?

(Continued from page 14)

Now some words to the League. First and foremost remember you are Party members linked together in a fight to build a Socialist society. You are not an isolated unit. Ensure, by your actions, that your claim to office and responsibility can be justified and base this on work for the Party. Make your Branch worthy of the Party. It is not sufficient to expect them to provide finance and amenities as a matter of right. We are a political organisation—not a social club like the Young Tories.

Remember, too, that in expecting the Party to appreciate your point of view that you in turn respect the views of the older members. Show the Party you are more interested in politics than pleasure.

Finally, many active League members wish to see a greater extension of League authority. It is the first step necessary to build up the League and so prove it worth as a political weapon. The opportunities now afforded youth are considerable and, with full co-operation at national, regional, divisional and local level, these can be developed to the full.

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# The Reader Writes . . .

## . . . About Publicity

I should like to express my appreciation of the service which the Labour Party Publicity Department offers Local Labour parties.

The Newmarket Labour Party were defending their only seat on the U.D.C., a seat won in 1946 by seven votes, and had decided to issue an election address different from the usual drab effort of other years. The order was placed locally, and then came the snag; the local printers could not supply the blocks for the double colour printing—two arrows outlined and ruled in red with black centre wording.

Not to be beaten, a hasty phone call was put through to Transport House on the Friday, at lunch time. Could they do anything in the way of blocks? They offered me block of four arrows, used in the model election addresses, which were gratefully accepted.

This block, and the redesigned election address, was in the printer's hands before lunch on the Saturday. A truly magnificent response to a Local Party's S.O.S. Well done, Publicity Department, and many thanks.

D. L. EDE,

Secretary Bury St. Edmunds D.L.P.

## . . . About Election Dates

I wrote in 1948 protesting at the holding of the municipal elections in the spring. Mr. J. Pinkerton very airily dismissed my protest as being a lone voice and said the matter had had very careful consideration. Perhaps Mr. Pinkerton will now admit that I was right and that spring elections are not, after all, the best for the Labour Party.

Look what has just happened, and take Luton as an example. We had the County Council election in April, the day was showery with a torrential downpour in the evening and yet we had only a slightly lower percentage poll than we had in the Municipal elections on May 12th, which was warm and sunny. People do not like two elections coming close together, and will not turn out a second time. Furthermore, and this is very important, the budget came after the County Council, but before the Town Council elections and probably had a very harmful effect on the Labour vote.

This is going to happen every year and is all wrong. It means that if the Chancellor is honest in his budget he helps to lose the elections, if he produces an election-winning budget then it may not really be an honest one. Was that point borne in mind when deciding to have elections in May? Look at the power it puts in the hands of a Tory Chancellor?

If we had had our Town Council elections last November as usual and the County Council elections in March before the budget like we always used to do then we should not have lost so many seats. Those people who voted for spring elections did the greatest possible disservice to the Labour Party and we are all having to suffer in consequence.

G. L. HEY,

Luton.

Former Local Councillor.

*Mr. Hey is quite wrong if he thinks that the change in the dates of the Local Elections were dictated by the interests of the Labour Party. The decision to change the dates was made after consultation with all bodies concerned, and the proposal received the support of all Parties in Parliament.*

*Surely the determining factor should be the most favourable time of the year both from the point of view of the electors, and of the candidates and their supporters, and there can be no doubt that this can only mean the spring.*

*Mr. Hey cannot be serious in his contention that a Labour Chancellor can only produce an election winning budget if he is dishonest, while a Tory Chancellor can produce election winning budgets without regard to the financial needs of the nation. It is time we started thinking about winning elections on policy and organisation and not in terms of periods in the year when naturally conditions may, or may not, be favourable to the Party.*

*If, when conditions are favourable to the majority of electors, Labour candidates are unsuccessful, then they should look for defects in their organisation and propaganda. Similarly any reaction against the budget must be considered as a deficiency in our ability to present the facts in a convincing way.—EDITOR.*

# Labour Party Publications

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Post free : 1 copy 7½d.

### NEW DISCUSSION SERIES : TOWARDS TOMORROW :

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THE WISE MAN SAYS, "VOTE LABOUR" } 18s. 6d.

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### LEAGUE OF YOUTH :

LABOUR'S LEAGUE OF YOUTH. Post free : 1 copy, 3d. ; 12, 1s. 6d. ; 100, 10s. 0d.

## BOOKS

SOLDIERS OF LEAD. Post free : 2s. 8d.

SPEAKERS' HANDBOOK, 1948-49 } Post free : 1s. 3d.

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GUIDE TO WAR PENSIONS. Post free : 1 copy 7d.

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KEIR HARDIE by William Stewart. Post free : 8s.

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15s. 0d. per dozen

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